Ph.D. Synopsis

On

Antecedents and Outcomes of Employee Engagement in Ethiopian Public Higher Education Institutions

For Registration
In

Doctor of Philosophy in Business Management

Supervised by:-
Dr Shabnam Saxena
Professor
Haryana School of Business

Submitted by:-
Tilahun Kidane Diko
Ph.D Student
Roll No. 190100090170

Guru Jambheshwar University of Science & Technology, Hisar, Haryana

October 20, 2020

Name of Student: - **Tilahun Kidane Diko**

Roll Number: - **190100090170**

Name of The Department: - **Haryana School of Business**

Subject: - **Business Management**

Name of The Supervisor: - **Prof. Shabnam Saxena**

1. TITLE OF THE RESEARCH

Antecedents and outcomes of Employee Engagement in Ethiopian Public Higher Education Institutions

2. Introduction

On continuous bases there are different management concept that gains attentions of policy makers, managers and academics. Employee engagement is among new concept emerged recent times that gain attention of HR professionals, consultants and academician since 2000. Employee engagement is defined in general as the level of commitment and involvement an employee has towards their organization and its values (Anitha, 2014). At the work level, it is defined as the level of vigor, dedication and absorption employees show in their job (Schaufeli et al., 2006). At the organization level, it includes positive employee attitudes toward the organization and its values (Robinson et al., 2004). Employee engagement was first coined by Kahn in 1990. He offered employee engagement as a new approach to employee motivation, outlining as a behavioral perspective based on three dimensions of physical, emotional and cognitive engagement.

Employee engagement has attracted a great deal of attention in academic circles and in work organizations due to its significant impact on organizational performance. According to Buckingham and Coffman (1999) cited by Whittington and Galpin (2010) Employee engagement positively affects productivity, profitability, employee retention, safety and customer satisfaction. Studies conducted by White (2008) have shown that the industries with the largest number of engaged employees are in human resources consulting or training (46%) and energy or utilities (40%), while the industries with the fewest engaged include academia or higher education (23%), high technology (24%) and government (25%). Gallup survey (2017) as

cited by Chandel (2019) reports that employee engagement is major challenges that majority of the colleges and universities are experiencing. Out of the surveyed faculty members, 34 %, 52% and 14% are engaged, not engaged and actively disengaged respectively. According to Raina and Khatri (2015) Universities are required to be a repository of the most specialized skill intellectuals and professionals. They serve as storehouse of knowledge for supplying the manpower needs of the nation as a whole. Though, in academic institutions faculties need to be engaged. Chandle (2019) reports that higher education institutions are challenged in keeping staffs engaged, motivated and committed.

According to Proclamation No. 650/2009, Higher education institutions in Ethiopia are established with the aim of attaining various objectives. The following three are the basic among them. The first is preparing knowledgeable, skilled, and attitudinally mature graduates in numbers with demand-based proportional balance of fields and disciplines so that the country shall become internationally competitive. The second is to ensure that education and research promote freedom of expression based on reason and rational discourse and are free from biases and prejudices. The third is designing and providing community and consultancy services that shall cater to the developmental needs of the country. To achieve these objectives, academic employees play critical roles. Most of the higher education institutions stipulate in their legislation that, faculty members are expected to devote their time on teaching, research and community services. According to Gurmessa, & Bayissa (2015), in Ethiopian universities majority of the faculty members devote their (75%) time on teaching and (25%) of their time on research and community service.

According to Yizengaw (2007) as cited by Gurmessa and Bayissa (2015), government of Ethiopia give due attention to higher education subsector in realization of the role that higher education institutions play in enhancing human capital of the country and in reducing poverty and economic growth, good governance and political stability. In its existence over six decades there is general perception that higher education system of Ethiopia delivered less than service expected by the public. Despite employee engagement being an important ingredient to employee productivity and organizational performance in service sector, there are limited empirical studies that have been conducted on the subject matter in relation to Ethiopian Public universities. Most research conducted on employee engagement in Ethiopia is limited to

financial industries and other corporate organization. The main reason for conducting this research is to find out the factors that actually drive employees to perform either their best or worst and the outcomes in Ethiopian public universities considering sample universities from all generations.

3. Literature Review

The literature review part firstly presents theoretical aspects like: Evolution of the concept employee engagement, definitions of employee engagement, importance of employee engagement, categories of employees' engagement, antecedents of employee engagement, outcomes of employee engagement and measurement of employee engagement were reviewed. In the second part of this review, extensive range of empirical reviews with special emphasis on more recent research findings on employee engagement were reviewed.

3.1 Theoretical Review

3.1.1 Evolution of the Concept of Employee Engagement

According to Executive (2007) employee engagement is new concept that gains prominence in human resource management literature since 2000. Even though, employee engagement seems relatively new concept, it goes back to 1990. It trace its root back to 1970's and 80's when human resource personnel's focus on employees satisfaction. But satisfaction more focuses on employees than the organization. It has little connection with engagement. Then attention shift from satisfaction to commitment, where employee becomes loyal and committed to the organization. Even as commitment is an important element and predictor of engagement it cannot replace it (Chandel, 2018). Originally the idea of employee engagement was first coined by Kahn in 1990. He considered it as a new approach to employee motivation, outlining as a behavioral perspective based on three dimensions of physical, emotional and cognitive engagement. According to Schaufeli et al. (2002) cited by David (2014) the concept of employee engagement was extended and refined by Utrecht University team. The team developed a measurement scale called Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) measures. Then onward it is commonly used by many country and gain prominence in academic areas. In 2008 high attention for employee engagement was given by UK government. They try to figure out the role of

employee engagement in increasing employee productivity and organizational competitive advantage by formulating slogan called “Engage for success” (David, 2014).

3.1.2 Definitions of Employee Engagement

Different scholars defined employee engagement in different ways. The meaning of the employee engagement concept remains ambiguous. Since the concept evolved gradually, it is defined in inconsistent ways in literature and it is difficult to find different scholars defining it in similar way. Engagement is concept having dispersed theoretical and empirical ground which is reflected by the relationship among different antecedents and consequences. Instead of defining the concept, many human resources consultants try to figure out its positive outcomes (Macey & Schneider, 2008 cited in Leiter & Bakker, 2010). Business consultants have applied the term engagement for range of concepts. They consider it as new concept that covers traditional concepts like; affective commitment, continuance commitment and extra role behavior. All this indicates the consultants fail to show what new value engagement ads. According to Macey and Schneider (2008) as cited in Leiter and Bakker (2010) the way practitioners conceptualize engagement considered as putting old wine in new bottles.

3.1.2.1 Corporate Definitions of Employee Engagement

Companies are place where different theories of engagement are executed into a practice. Employee engagement has been defined by different companies in different ways. Corporate Leadership Council (2004) in its executive summary defined engagement from outcome perspective. The Council defines engagement as the “extent to which employees commit to something or someone in their organization, how hard they work, and how long they stay as a result of that commitment”. By using this outcomes-focused definition, the tangible benefits of engagement can be measured, as opposed to focusing on “engagement for engagement’s sake.” Nokia Siemens Networks in its Corporate Responsibility report (2008) defined employee engagement as concept having three components. To be fully engaged employees must fulfill three criteria. The first one is concerned with thinking. Rational understanding of organizations strategic of log term goals, values and how employees fit with it. The second is feeling which means employees must have feeling of emotional attachment to their organization. The last one is act (motivation and willingness to invest discretionary energy above and beyond). According to CPID (2019) employee engagement is attaining mutual benefit for both employer and

employees in employment relationship. From employee point of view it is about gaining well being, job satisfaction etc and from employer or organizational angel is about improving performance, commitment etc. Employee engagement tries to put together older and more established concepts like: motivation, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior and others. Generally, employee engagement is beyond motivation and job satisfaction. It covers employee's commitment toward the organizations and its values as well as willingness to help/support colleagues.

3.1.2.2 Academic Definitions of Employee Engagement

According to Kahn (1990) personal engagement's the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performances. Employee engagement is defined as a positive attitude held by the employees towards the organizations as well as its values. An engaged employee the one who is aware of business environment and works with other employees to advance the performance for the advantage of the organizations (Robinson et al., 2004). According to Robinson (2007) engagement is a positive attitude held by the employee towards the organization and its values. An engaged employee is aware of business context, and works with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the organization. The organization must work to develop and nurture engagement, which requires a two-way relationship between employer and employee. According to Armstrong (2009) employee engagement occurs when employees at work are interested in and positive, excited with their job and are ready to go extra mile to get work accomplished to the best of their ability. According to Shuck and Wollard (2010) cited by Shuck, et al., (2011) employee engagement is an individual employee's cognitive, emotional and behavioral state directed toward desired organizational outcomes. Gallup researchers Fleming and Asplund (2007) cited in Anitha (2014) employee engagement is the ability to capture the heads, hearts, and souls of your employees to instill an intrinsic desire and passion for excellence. After reviewing different researches and articles, Borah and Baruah (2014) proposed the following working definition for employee engagement. Employee engagement is all about high level of physical energy or vigor, intense and eager enjoyment or passion and sustained effort towards work. Their definition proposes work related performance which is associated with achievement of organizational goal.

3.1.3 Importance of Employee Engagement

Employee engagement has a positive impact on the organization. When there is higher engagement, it leads to lowering employee turnover, increased productivity, improved financial performance and higher return to shareholders. Organizations with higher engagement levels tend to have lower employee turnover, higher productivity, higher total shareholder returns and better financial performance. Overall engagement is considered as a means to generate better result for both organization and individual employees (Baumruk, 2006). In the past ten years, employee engagement has gained due attention. Today organizations use employee engagement as a strategic tool for gaining competitive advantage (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014). There is increasing awareness among the organizations regarding the criticality of employee engagement to the success and performance of the organizations. Engaged employees are considered as backbone of working environment where employees become enthusiastic, ethical and accountable towards their job (Levinson, 2007 cited in Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014).

According to Meere (2005) as cited in Executive (2007) and Gallup (2006) employees are classified into three categories based upon the level of engagement. The first one is employees who are considered as engaged. Engaged employees are those who work with enthusiasm and feel a profound connection to their organization. They are desirous of his/her job, take personal responsibility and obligation towards their organizations. They move beyond their job description and support the company to stay competitive in the environment. They are against status quo and highly innovative. The second are not engaged employees. They are type of employees who lacks energy during performance of the job. Are those employees who attend and participate at work but, put no passion into their works. They concentrate more on their task than the outcomes. They do only what they are told to do. The third one is disengaged employees, are types of employees who are unhappy at work and undermine the work of other engaged colleagues work on daily basis. These types of employees are against everything in the organization and see things in negative way.

3.1.4 Antecedents of Employee Engagement

Antecedents are the factors that predict employee engagement. Different scholars suggest different factors that influence employee engagement. According to Robinson (2007) sense of

feeling valued and involved is the most important driver of employee engagement. In addition he has suggested that, this driver has different sub components. The components includes participation in decision making process, extent to which employees express their feeling and management bodies listen to their voice, room for growth and development for employees, and finally the concern that the organization has toward employees health and safety. Executive (2007) summarizes the drivers of employee engagement as; maintaining two way relationship between employer and employees; employees ability to associate themselves with the organizations values, products and services; from the organization side, they should also communicate vision, mission, values and strategies to employees; organization should maintain two way communications (top down and bottom up). Specifically encouraging upward communication will result to employee engagement. According to Armstrong (2009) work is the most important factor that results to employee engagement. The work itself results to satisfaction and the satisfaction will also lead to intrinsic motivation and enhanced engagement. When a given work is interesting and challenging, if employees feels that the work is important, give freedom to act, pave room for advancement, possibility to use and develop skills and abilities, it will result to engagement. In addition Armstrong also suggests supportive and cooperative work environment, leadership, opportunities for personal growth and opportunities to contribute (employee voice) as a strong drivers of engagement.

The following antecedents are identified from literature:

Work environment

An employee level of engagement is determined significantly by work environment. According to Kahn (1990) supportive and trusting interpersonal relationships, supportive management promotes psychological safety. In addition he suggests supportive environments let organizational members to try new things and even fail without fear of the consequences. An enabling, supportive and inspirational work environment result to engagement by influencing how people regard their roles and carry them out (Armstrong, 2009). Culture of integrity, innovation and good internal communication system are considered important for enhancing engagement level of employees (Lloyd Morgan 2004 cited in Robertson & Markwick, 2009). According to Glen (2006) as cited in Robertson and Markwick (2009) work environment play a key role in determining engagement along with organizational process, role challenge, management and product service. According to Deci and Ryan (1987) as cited by Anitha (2014)

stipulate that supportive work environment (showing concern for needs and feelings of workers, offering constructive reaction, encouraging employees to provide their opinion and utilize their potential in solving organizational problems) is considered as key predictors of employee engagement.

Leadership

Organizational cultures having collaborative leadership style (where everyone is considered as stakeholder and participate in it) result to high engagement (Levinson 2007 as cited in Robertson & Markwick, 2009). According to Wallace and Trinka (2009) cited in Anitha (2014) engagement occurs naturally when leaders are inspiring. Leaders should communicate the role of employees' effort in making the organization more successful and effective. If employees feel their role is considered critical and meaningful, it will result to increased interest and engagement. When leaders are supportive of their subordinates, creating trusting relationship and committed to their promise, then the organization can get engaged employees (Muzee et al., 2016). Somasekharan and Kumathadevi (2017) suggested for increasing employee engagement, effective leadership qualities should be encouraged so that each employee will try to work his/her best and will work together without any ego clashes. Zhao and Sheng (2019) identified that Charismatic leadership result to high level of employee engagement in organizations. On contrary authoritarian leadership has negative impact on employee engagement.

Team and co workers

Kahn (1990) found that supportive and trusting interpersonal relationships, as well as a supportive team, promote employee engagement. An open and supportive environment is essential for employees to feel safe in the workplace and engage totally with their responsibility. Supportive environments allow members to experiment and to try new things and even fail without fear of the consequences. According to Anitha (2014) team and co worker relationship are important forces that influence employee engagement. To increase employee engagement, effective team and a healthy co-worker relationship are required in the organization.

Training and career development

Paradise (2008) found that employee training improves service accuracy and thereby increases service performance and employee engagement. When employees are given training and learning opportunity, their confidence boosted and they become more engaged in their job. If employees are given an opportunity to grow up across the career path ladder through training and development, it will result to enhancement of employee engagement level. Somasekharan and Kumathadevi (2017) suggested high tech training should be offered to the employee in order to increase their engagement level.

Compensation

According to Kahn (1990) benefits and reward that employees obtain from their organization highly determines their level of engagement. As a result employees' engagement is determined by their perception towards the amount and content of reward they obtain. Maslach et al., (2001) identified that absence of rewards and recognition result to burnout. Therefore, adequate and appropriate recognition and reward is important for engagement.

Organizational policies

The magnitude of employee engagement in the organization is influenced by organizational policies, structures, procedures and systems. Organizational policies and procedures are extremely important for employee engagement and the eventual achievement of the business goals. Important policies and procedures may include fair recruitment and selection, flexi-timing, aid in balancing work and life, and fair promotional policies (Anitha, 2014).

Work place wellbeing

Talent Report (2003) found that the most important driver of engagement was senior management's interest in employee wellbeing. According to Towers (2003) senior managers concern for employee's wellbeing is the most critical driver of employee engagement. Workplace wellbeing is a holistic measure that enhances employee engagement. Wellbeing is defined as "all the things that are important to how we think about and experience our lives" (Rath & Harter, 2010 cited in Anitha 2014).

Employee voice

When employees are having voice (being informed, being able to express their opinions to their supervisors and being heard), it will make them more engaged. It is demonstrated in a form of involvement, participation and consultation (Holbeche & Matthews, 2012).

Job characteristics

Task characteristics that provide challenging work, variety that allow the use of different skills and personal discretion will result to psychological meaningfulness. A job that has high score on the characteristics such as skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback provide employees to be more engaged (Kahn, 1990). Saks (2006) found that, a job characteristic is important predictor of job engagement.

Organizational justice

According to Khan and Usman (2012) cited in Ozer et al. (2017), organizational justice is defined as people's perception on the extent of receiving equal treatment at their workplace. When employees have high perception of justice in their organization, they are more likely to feel obliged to be fair in discharging their responsibility and become highly engaged. On the other hand, low perception of justice will result employee to withdraw and become disengaged (Saks 2006). Ozer et al. (2017) in their study argue that, rising employee's perception of organizational justice will increase employee's engagement level.

Work life balance

Parkes and Langford, (2008) defined work life balance as individuals ability to satisfy both their work and family commitment and other non work responsibilities. Work life balance is employment practice concerned with providing room for employees to balance their responsibility at work and interests they have outside work and so reconcile the competing interest of work and home by satisfying their own personal needs and organizational needs (Armstrong, 2009). Study conducted by Waclawska (2018) also confirms that, work life balance has positive influence on employee engagement. Larasati and Hasanati (2019) in their study found that, work life balance influences employee engagement. On the other hand study conducted in Malaysia higher learning institutions shows that, work life balance has small influence on work engagement of non academic employees (Abdullah & Shafee 2020).

In addition Corporate Leadership Council (CLC) (2004) reports identified 25 most important drivers of employee engagement. Among those drivers, connection between employees' job and organizational strategy and employees understanding of how important their job is to organization is considered highest impact drivers. Moreover, good internal communication, reputation, integrity, and a culture of innovation are also important manager characteristics which result in to increased engagement. According to Siddhanta and Roy (2010) four major conditions in the workplace determine employee engagement. The first one is organizations culture. Organizational culture which is connected with employees that give employees room to take part in decision making activity and enables staffs to shoulder more responsibility results to more employee engagement. The second is, continuous reinforcement of people in the organization is another requirement. Rewarding employees on continuous base for their performance result to high engagement. The third one is devising clear criteria for measuring performance what they call it meaningful metrics. The last one is organizational performance. High organizational performance leads to pride satisfaction and sense of belongingness among employees which in turn result to engagement among employees.

3.1.5 Outcomes of Employee Engagement

This section is concerned with identifying the outcome of engagement. Different literature shows the benefits of investing on engagement. The outcomes are organizational related and individual employee related. Let us see in detail as follows. Corporate Leadership Council (CLC) (2004) reports employee engagement is critical to improve performance and retention of employees. Organizations can increase performance by 20% and reduce employee turnover by 87% by increasing employee engagement level. Saks (2006) has identified improving job satisfaction, better organizational commitment, reducing employee turnover intention and developing organizational citizenship behavior as outcomes of employee engagement. Executive (2007) identified the outcomes of engagement as follows. The outcomes are more related to staffs satisfaction and commitment. The first outcome is, staffs become involved in organizations, participate and contribute to organizational performance. Second, employees will become proud of their organization and endorse it as a place to work. Finally, staffs show real commitment to their organization and their job and in addition they will be ready to "go the extra mile". Bailey, et al., (2017) in their narrative synthesis identified the outcomes of engagement under two major categories. The first category is related with performance; higher level performance such as

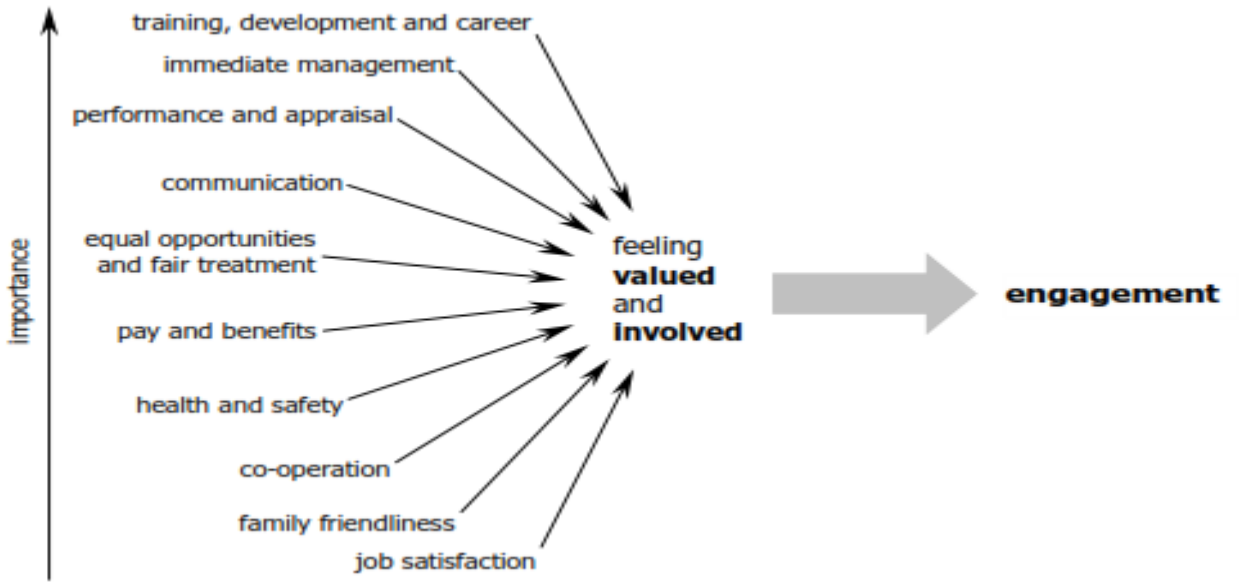
organizational or team performance and individual level outcomes like task performance, extra role performance and counterproductive performance. The second category is role of engagement in enhancing morale. Enhance morale of employee in two ways: wellbeing and health perception and work related attitudes like low turnover intention, organizational commitment and job satisfaction. According to Somasekharan and Kumathadevi (2017) engagement result to high employee commitment, job satisfaction, and feeling of job security, high performance and quality improvement.

3.1.6 Measuring Employee Engagement

Engagement has measurable constructs. Since employee engagement introduced by practitioners, different firms developed their own instrument to measure employee engagement. Measures are developed to benchmark employees' level of engagement. The following are the common measures of employee engagement.

3.1.6.1 Institute of Employment Studies Engagement Survey (IES's engagement survey)

Robinson et al. (2004) shows the main drivers of employee engagement by the diagnostic model. According to the model, the key driver of the engagement is sense of feeling valued and involved. If engagement level is to be maintained and improved, identification of those diagnostic components is required. The relative strength of those drivers as well as sense of feeling valued and involved may vary from organization to organization. The model is presented as follows.



Source : IES 2003 cited in Robinson et al. (2004)

Robinson et al. (2007) attitude survey of over 10,000 employees in 14 organizations in the NHS shows twelve attitude statements representing engagement were tested; all were found to 'sit together' reliably, to comprise a single indicator of engagement.

3.1.6.2 Gallup Workplace Audit (Q12)

The Gallup Q12 (1992 - 1999) is a survey designed to measure employee engagement. It is composed of 12 items which measures employee perception of work characteristics. The questions were developed based up on focus group discussions, research on management and scientific studies on the aspects of employee engagement that are important and influenced by the manager at the business unit or work group level (https://www.scribd. com/doc/81709655 /Gallup-Employee-Engagement-Questionnaire).

3.1.6.3 Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)

Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) measure three (Vigor, dedication and absorption) elements which constitutes work engagement. Vigor is assessed using six items. Vigor is all about willingness to invest energy effort and showing persistence in difficult situations. Employees who score high on vigor have much stamina and energy. Dedication is the second element which constitutes work engagement. It refers to deriving sense of significance from

one's work, feeling motivated and proud of jobs they are doing and challenged by it. It is measured by using five items. Employees who score high on dedication strongly identify with their work because of the meaningfulness, inspiration and challenges they experience. Absorption refers to being immersed in ones work totally and happily. In addition it is also considered as facing difficulty to detach oneself from the job. It is measured by using six items. Those employees who score high on absorption feel that they usually they feel immersed by their work and have difficulties detaching from it because it carries them away (Schaufeli et al., 2003).

3.2 Empirical Review

Causal study conducted by Anitha (2014) on determinants of employee engagements and their impacts on employee performance shows that about 67.2 of variance in employee engagement are influenced by the following factors. The factors include working environment, leadership, team and co worker relationships, training and career development, compensation, policies and procedures and workplace wellbeing. Also the finding shows that employee performance is highly determined by their engagement level. Employee's perception of their work environment shape and direct the extent of employee engagement. To achieve high level of engagement, the organizations work environment should provide sense of meaning, shared destination with other employees and encouraging them to be emotionally attached. Employee to develop positive perception towards their organization and work environment, organizations, should develop supportive work environment. In order to get employees engaged, the work environment should include good culture, good team, good manager, good physical surrounding, sustainable compensation package and provision of food and drinking in the work place.

Song et al. (2014) identified that the direct path between learning organization culture and EEL (Employee engagement level) was significant. But the direct path between learning organization culture and team performance was not significant. EEL have mediating effect on between the learning organizational culture and team performance. Generally the finding indicates supportive organizational culture influence employee engagement and team performance directly or indirectly within different cultural context.

Albrecht et al. (2015) conducted study and argue that, in all employment relationship and employee life cycle, engagement required to be integrated. Strategic integration of engagement

across HRM functions like, selection, socialization, performance management and training and development practice is required.

Employee engagement empirical study conducted by Hakeem and Gulzar (2015) in higher education sector of Kashmir found that academicians have fairly good level of work engagement. There is no difference among males and females in terms of their level of work engagement. In terms of age, employees who is age of 48 and above are more engaged than employees below 48.

Study conducted by Jaschik and Lederman (2015) entitled "College and university faculty workplace engagement" highlighted that male faculty members are more engaged than females; faculty members younger than 40 and older than 60 are more likely engaged, faculty members in the age category between 40 and 50 are less likely engaged. Their study also reveals that opinions are valued by the department, presence of caring administrator, feeling respected of their carrier in the community are the strong predictors of employee engagement. But, job security is not factor that influence faculty engagement.

Janetius et al. (2016) conducted study entitled "Engaged employees in institutes of higher education". The findings show that, emotional maturity, personal integrity, resourcefulness, feeling proud of the profession and altruism as antecedents and attributes to engaged employees in higher educational institutions. Engaged teachers possess characteristics like; psychological presence, emotional involvement, voluntarily spending time and energy in executing duty and deliberate involvement in student support program. The study also reveals the following factors as barriers that hider engagement. The factors include; poor compensation/benefit, lack of concern for employees wellbeing, poor HRM practices, deprivation of freedom to perform, poor work life balance caused by absence of holiday and leisure time leave and workloads.

Research conducted by Obeidat (2016) aimed at exploring the relationship between corporate social responsibility, employee engagement, and organizational performance, reveals that, presence of CSR in organizations leads to increment in employee's engagement level. The researcher argues that, an employee need to classify themselves and others into social groups in an effort to derive part of their identity from that group. Generally, CSR is found to be strong predictor of employee engagement.

Aktar and Pangil (2017) study intended to identify predictors of engagement among the banking employees come up with the findings which shows that HRM practices namely career advancement, job security and performance feedback are positively and significantly related with employee engagement. Generally the result indicates that, having good HRM practice in the organization results to employees to feel valued, appreciated and recognized.

Study conducted by Farndale (2017) entitled "two-country (UK and India) study of engagement, supervisors and performance appraisal including the mediating role of supervisory support" come up with the following findings. First, the relationship between work and organizational engagement was found significant in both countries. But, it applies interactional justice in UK and procedural justice in India. Mediation analysis shows presence of direct link between procedural justice and organizational engagement in India. In Indian context, opportunity for voice in organizational procedure such as PA is considered important driver of organizational engagement. The researcher theorizes this difference is due to culture. In India, there is higher level of power distance that encourages employees to feel the need for formal procedure. In contrast, in UK there was no significant relationship between either forms of justice. This is due to lower power distance culture.

Rupa and Sivasubramanian (2017) found that reward, benefits and quality of work life impacts employee engagement positively. Reward include both financial and non financial. Benefits are the wellness program including work life balance.

According to Walden et al. (2017) communication about necessary information related with development within the organization and individual task result to feeling of connection to one's own work (job engagement) which manifests as feeling of presence, immersion in task and interest in going to work. To increase engagement adequate and quality information is required from employer side. Organization should provide communication which deemed by employees as open, through and important to their daily work is required.

Using an exploratory factor analysis, Whittington et al. (2017) identified four distinct performance management dimensions (characteristics of individual's performance goal, outcomes and reward, perceived organizational support and opportunity to participate in goal

setting and implementation process) which has positive strong relationship with employee engagement.

Belay and Lehal (2019) found that, employees perception of workplace support (organizational, supervisory and coworker) significantly influence their engagement in higher education institutions. When employees perceive that there is support from workplace, they develop sense of belongingness, identity which in turn makes them to become committed and to work hard.

According to Hameduddin and Lee (2019) perceived organizational support (POI) positively influences employee engagement. It has substantial influence on employee engagement both directly and indirectly (through job identification). Constructed external image (CEI) has negative indirect influence on employee engagement. When CEI is less favorable, it results to high job identification which in turn influences job engagement level positively. Job identification serves as mediator when external image is less attractive and serves as tool to engage and motivate employees.

Adnan et al. (2020) found that leaders are considered as source of motivation that boosts the feeling of employee's workplace spirituality through showing ethical leadership behaviors. In turn it results to workplace engagement among employees. Findings of the study depict that the leaders are the source of motivation and boost the feeling of workplace spirituality within the employees through demonstrating ethical leadership behavior. Overall, ethical leadership and workplace spirituality enhances the engagement of worker in a positive manner and in turn increases organizational performance.

Ancarani et al. (2020) conducted a study on Italian local government workers to explore the role of middle managers leadership style in promoting engagement. The result reveals that, work engagement is positively and significantly linked to middle managements transformational leadership.

Rahman et al. (2020) identify that, organizational support has positive effect on employee engagement. But, empowerment does not have any effect on employee's engagement. Taking care of employees' goals, values and opinions have greater effect on employees' perception of support obtained from organization.

4 Research Gap

The literature review part was conducted with the aim of exploring what factors determine employee engagement and outcomes. The review result shows that, there are enormous factors that determine employee's engagement in different industries. The most commonly identified factors are: work environment, reward/compensation, leadership, organizational support, organizational justice, nature of the work, employee voice, job characteristics, wellbeing and work life balance. Even some of the findings are contradicting with each other which require further investigation. To mention few, some literature says males are more engaged, some other says females are more engaged.

Most studies conducted on employee engagement were done on corporate sectors. Few are done in educational sector specifically higher education institutions. When we see Ethiopian contexts, most researchers are confined to financial sector like Banks. Only two researches were found published which were conducted on Ethiopian higher education institution related with employee engagement. The first study conducted by Gurmessa and Bayissa (2015), consider pay and performance implication on staff motivation and engagement. The second one is study conducted by Belay and Lehal (2019) entitled fueling employee work engagement through workplace support evidence from Ethiopian public universities. These two studies consider only the role of pay, performance and workplace support on staff engagement. But there are numerous factors that may determine employee engagement in addition to investigated factors by both researchers. In addition both researchers only focus on antecedents or predictors of engagement and did not consider its consequence or outcomes. And also the numbers of universities investigated are very few. Only four universities were considered in the previous studies. Therefore, this study will consider other antecedents and outcomes as well and conduct the research on more number of universities by taking representative sample from all generations. To fill this gap the title "Antecedents and outcomes of Employee Engagement in Ethiopian Public Higher Education Institution" is proposed.

5 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is making meaningful enquiry and investigation on the antecedents and outcomes of employee engagement in Ethiopian Public Higher Education Institutions.

Specifically, the research will try to achieve the following sub objectives:

- To identify the level of employee engagement in Ethiopian Public Higher Education Institutions;
- to study the effect of demographic variables of employees on employee engagement;
- to study the effect of antecedent variables on overall employee engagement in Ethiopian Public Higher Education Institutions;
- to study the effect of employee engagement on outcome variables of employee engagement; and
- to study the effect of antecedents of employee engagement on the outcome variables of employee engagement.

6 Scope and Relevance of the Study

6.1 Scope

The scope of this study will be limited to geographically, conceptually, methodologically, study institutions and population. Geographically the study will be delineated to Ethiopia public universities. In addition the universities to be covered through this study will be representative sample from all four generations namely first generation, second generation, third generation and fourth generation. Conceptually the study will be limited towards antecedents of engagement (Job characteristics, physical environment, leadership, compensation management, organizational justice, training and career development, work life balance and employee voice) and outcomes of engagement (Organizational citizenship behavior, turnover intention and employee performance). In accordance to research objective, this study will utilize descriptive and inferential methodologies. Regarding, the study institutions, this study will focus only public universities of Ethiopia. In terms of population, the study will consider only academic staffs.

6.2 Relevance of the study

The purpose of this study is to identify antecedents and outcomes of employee engagement in higher public education institutions of Ethiopia. This study will be helpful in establishing link between what top management offers and what employees' expects. It may help HR managers and Universities higher officials in knowing what actually can engage or disengage employees. Based on the result of this study, universities may design or redesign the existing policies and implement key changes in order to increase the productivity and efficiency of employees. Besides that, it will assist them in retaining the best talent within the organization.

Therefore, studying antecedents and outcomes of employee engagement has a paramount benefit to the institutions and scholars in the area.

7 Research methodology

7.1 Research Design

The study will use a combined quantitative and qualitative research design, with the quantitative portion based on the Likert scale survey instrument. The qualitative portion of the survey instrument will be derived from the comments associated with each survey item as entered by the respondents. The comments will be analyzed utilizing a case study approach for similarities to the quantitative portion as well as for any discrepancies with the quantitative portion.

In terms of time dimension this study will be Cross-sectional field survey method because data will be collected at one point of time during the data collection period to assess the relationship between independent variables and dependent variable. In cross-sectional field surveys, independent and dependent variables are measured at the same point in time using a single questionnaire. In addition the study will also be co relational in design because there is intention to establish the relationship between dependent and independent variable of the study.

7.2 Sources and method of data collection

Data required for this study will be obtained from primary and secondary sources. The primary source will be academic employees of the selected institutions using questionnaires. Secondary source will be used in triangulating findings of previous researches and this particular study.

7.3 Sample Design

The researcher will use a two stage sampling procedure; in the first stage target universities will be selected and in the second stage target respondents from each university will be selected so as to get the required data.

Sampling stage I

Target population of this study will be academic staff of Ethiopian public universities. The universities will be categorized in to four generation (strata). Accordingly, two universities from each stratum (8 universities) will be selected randomly and considered as the target sample frame.

Sampling stage II

The total academic staff population from the eight institutions will be obtained and sample size will be demined using the following simplified formula. According to Yamane (1967), with 95% confidence level and 0.05 sampling errors are assumed for the following equation:

$$n = N \div (1 + N e^2)$$

Where: n is the sample size,
N is population size and

e = error term

In order to select ample respondents from the target institutions, proportional stratified simple random sampling will be employed.

7.4 Method of data analysis

To meet the objective of the study, both descriptive and inferential statistics will be employed. From descriptive statistics percentage, frequency and mean will be used for analysis. From inferential statistics, structural equation modeling will be used to predict and estimate the relationship between dependent and independent variables using AMOS software.

8 Organization of the study

This proposed research study will be organized into five chapters.

Chapter one: Introduction

The introductory part will include the background, the conceptual framework and the overall objectives of the study.

Chapter two: Literature Review

The second chapter will discuss about different literatures written on the subject matter of the study, both theoretical as well as empirical and try to show the gap that the proposed study will tries to fill.

Chapter three: Research Methodology

The third chapter will show the research methodology to be followed to achieve the study objectives. It tries to explain the research design, data collection methods, validity and reliability population, sample and method of data analysis.

Chapter four: Results and Discussions

In this chapter data obtained through data collection tools will be analyzed. Interpretation of the result will be carried out in line with the research objectives.

Chapter five: Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the finding of the study, conclusions will be drawn and recommendations will be forwarded for the concerned stakeholders. In addition, it will also show the limitation of the study as well as room for future research.

References

Abdullah, Z. & Shafee, S. (2020). The impact of the work-life balance on work engagement of non-academic employee in higher learning institutions in Malaysia. *Educational Administration Research and Review*, *4*(1), 79-87.

Adnan, N., Bhatti, O. K. & Farooq, W. (2020). Relating ethical leadership with work engagement: How workplace spirituality mediates?. *Cogent Business & Management*, *7*(1), 1739494.

Aktar, A. & Pangil F. (2017). The Relationship between employee engagement, HRM practices and perceived organizational support: Evidence from Banking Employees. *International Journal of Human Resource Studies*, *7*(3).

Albrecht, S. L., Bakker, A. B., Gruman, J. A., Macey, W. H. & Saks, A. M. (2015). Employee engagement, human resource management practices and competitive advantage. *Journal of Organizational Effectiveness: People and Performance*, *2*(1), 7-35.

Ancarani, A., Arcidiacono, F., Mauro, C. D., & Giammanco, M. D. (2020). Promoting work engagement in public administrations: the role of middle managers' leadership. *Public Management Review*, 1-30.

Anitha J. (2014). Determinants of employee engagement and their impact on employee performance. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, *63* (3), 308-323.

Armstrong M. (2009). *Handbook of Human Resource Management Practice*. Kogan Page Publishers.

Bailey, C., Madden, A., Alfes, K. & Fletcher, L. (2017). The meaning, antecedents and outcomes of employee engagement: A narrative synthesis. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, *19*(1), 31-53.

Baumruk, R. (2006). Why managers are crucial to increasing engagement: Identifying steps managers can take to engage their workforce. *Strategic HR Review*, *5*(2) 24-27.

Bedarkar, M. & Pandita, D. (2014). A Study on the drivers of employee engagement impacting employee performance. Procedia - *Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 133, 106 – 115

Belay, D. & Lehal, R. (2019). Fueling employees work engagement through work place support: evidence from Ethiopian public university. *International Journal of Management Studies 1*(4), 25 – 33.

Borah, N. & Baruah, P. (2014). Reconceptualising employee engagement. *Journal of Management Outlook*, *4*(2), 67-73.

Chandel, P. (2018). The evolution of employee engagement: A unique construct. *International Journal of Human Resource Management and Research (IJHRMR), 8*(6), 199 – 216.

Chandel, P. (2019) Assessing the association of employee engagement with affective organizational commitment in higher education institutions. Research Review *International Journal of Multidisciplinary*, *02*(04), 907-912

CIPD (2019). Employee engagement and motivation. Aavailable at https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/fundamentals/relations/engagement/factsheet#6227 Accessed on July 3, 2020.

Corporate Leadership Council. (2004). Driving employee performance and retention through employee engagement: A quantitative analysis of the effectiveness of employee engagement strategies. Available at https://www.stcloudstate. edu/humanresources/files/documents/supv-brown-bag/employee-engagement.pdf Accessed on July 4, 2020.

David G. (2014). Employee engagement: a skeptical analysis. *Journal of Organizational Effectiveness: People and Performance*, *1*(2), 141-156.

Executive, S. (2007). Employee engagement in the public Sector: A review of literature. *Edinburgh: Office of Chief Researcher, Scottish Executive Social Research*. Available at https://www2.gov.scot/resource/doc/176883/0049990.pdf Accessed on July 4, 2020.

Farndale, E. (2017). Two-country study of engagement, supervisors and performance appraisal. *Journal of Asia Business Studies*, *11*(3), 342 – 362.

Gallup (2006). Gallup study: engaged employees inspire company innovation: national survey finds that passionate workers are most likely to drive organizations forward. Available at https://news.gallup.com/businessjournal/24472/whos-driving-innovation-your-company.aspx , Accessed on July 08, 2020.

Gurmessa, Z. B. & Bayissa, J. T. (2015). Pay and performance in Ethiopian higher education: implications towards staff motivation and engagement. *European Journal of Business and Management 7*(7), 328 – 339.

Hakeem, I. A. & Gulzar, S. (2015). Employee engagement: an empirical study of higher education sector in Kashmir. *Abhinav International Monthly Refereed Journal of Research in Management & Techonology*, *4*(4), 20-26.

Hameduddin, T. & Lee, S. (2019). Employee engagement among public employees: examining the role of organizational images. *Public Management Review*, 1-25.

Holbeche, L. & Matthews, G. (2012). *Engaged: Unleashing Your Organization's Potential Through Employee Engagement*. John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Janetius, S. T., Padmanabhan, R. & Mini, T. C. (2016). Engaged employees in institutes of higher education. *International Journal of Advanced Research*, *4*(11), 308-312.

Jaschik, S. C. O. T. T. & Lederman, D. O. U. G. (2015). College and university faculty workplace engagement. *Inside Higher Ed*, 1-27.

Kahn, W. (1990). Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work. *Academy of Management Journal, 33*(4), 692-724.

Larasati, D. P. & Hasanati, N. (2019, March). The effects of work-life balance towards employee engagement in millennial generation. In *4th ASEAN Conference on Psychology, Counselling, and Humanities (ACPCH 2018)*. Atlantis Press.

Leiter, M. P. & Bakker, A. B. (2010). Work engagement: introduction. *Work Engagement: A Handbook of Essential Theory and Research*. Psychology Press.

Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W. B. & Leiter, M. P. (2001). Job burnout. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *52*(1), 397-422.

Muzee, H., Bagire, V. & Ngoma, M. (2016). Strategic leadership and employee engagement, evidences from an African industrial setting. *Open Access Library Journal*, **3**: e2907. Available at http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1102907. Accessed on July 10, 2020.

Nokia Siemens Networks (2008). Corporate responsibility report. Available at https://www.nokia.com/sites/default/files/2018-12/nsn_cr_report_2008_full.pdf Accessed on July 7, 2020.

Obeidat, B. Y. (2016). Exploring the relationship between corporate social responsibility, employee engagement, and organizational performance: The case of Jordanian mobile telecommunication companies. *International Journal of Communications, Network and System Sciences*, *9*(09), 361 – 386.

Ozer, O., Ugurluoglu, O. & Saygili, M. (2017). Effect of organizational justice on work engagement in healthcare sector of Turkey. *Journal of Health Management*, *19*(1), 73-83.

Paradise, A. (2008). Influences engagement. *Training and Development*, *62*(1), 54-59.

Parkes, L. P. & Langford, P. H. (2008). Work–life balance or work–life alignment? A test of the importance of work-life balance for employee engagement and intention to stay in organisations. *Journal of Management & Organization*, *14*(3), 267-284.

Proclamation No. 650/2009. Higher Education Proclamation, Addis Ababa (2009, 17th Sept) 4976.

Rahman, A., Bjork, P. & Ravald, A. (2020). Exploring the effects of service provider's organizational support and empowerment on employee engagement and well-being. *Cogent Business & Management*, *7*(1), 1767329.

Raina, K., & Khatri, P. (2015). Faculty engagement in higher education: prospects and areas of research. *On the Horizon*. *23*(04), 285 - 308

Robertson-Smith, G. & Markwick, C. (2009). *Employee Engagement: A Review of Current Thinking*. Brighton: Institute for Employment Studies.

Robinson ,D. Perryman, S. & Hayday, S. (2004). The drivers of employee engagement report 408. *Institute for Employment Studies, UK 72.*

Robinson, D (2007). Employee engagement: Institute for Employment Studies. Available at https://www.employment-studies.co.uk/system/files/resources/files/op11.pdf Accessed on July 4, 2020.

Rupa, H. S. & Sivasubramanian, M. (2017). Employee engagement in information technology services. *International Journal of Research in Economics and Social Sciences*, *7*(10), 36 – 50.

Saks, A. M. (2006). Antecedents and consequences of employee engagement. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, *21*(7), 600 – 619.

Schaufeli, W. B. & Bakker, A. B. (2003). Utrecht work engagement scale: Preliminary manual. *Occupational Health Psychology Unit, Utrecht University, Utrecht*, *26*, 64-100.

Schaufeli, W. B., Bakker, A. B. & Salanova, M. (2006). The measurement of work engagement with a short questionnaire: a cross-national study. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, *66*(4), 701-716.

Shuck, M. B., Rocco, T. S. & Albornoz, C. A. (2011). Exploring employee engagement from the employee perspective: Implications for HRD. *Journal of European Industrial Training*, *35*(4), 300 – 325.

Siddhanta, A. & Roy, D. (2010). Employee engagement engaging the 21st century workforce. *Asian Journal of Management Research*. Available at http://www. ipublishing.co .in/ajmrvol1no1/sped12011/AJMRSP1015.pdf Accessed on July 6,2020.

Somasekharan, T. M. & Kumathadevi, K. (2017). Factors and outcomes of employee engagement: A preliminary study. *International Journal of Research in Arts and Science*, *3*(Special Issue), 01-02.

Song, J. H., Lim, D. H., Kang, I. G. & Kim, W. (2014). Team performance in learning organizations: mediating effect of employee engagement. *The learning organization*, *21*(5), 290 – 309.

Towers Perrin Talent Report (2003). Working today: understanding what drives employee engagement. Available at: http://www.keepem.com/doc_files/Towers_ Perrin_Talent_ 2003%_28TheFinal%29.pdf Accessed on July 2, 2020.

Waclawska, I. (2018). Work life balance practices and their impact on employee engagement & turnover intention: A study of employees in the further education and training sector in Ireland. Doctoral dissertation, Dublin, National College of Ireland.

Walden, J., Jung, E. H. & Westerman, C. Y. (2017). Employee communication, job engagement, and organizational commitment: A study of members of the Millennial Generation. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, *29*(2-3), 73-89

White, B. (2006). Employee Engagement Report. Blessing White, Inc. *Princeton, New Jersey. Available at: www. blessingwhite. com*

Whittington, J. L. & Galpin, T. J. (2010). The engagement factor: building a high-commitment organization in a low-commitment world. *Journal of Business Strategy*, *31*(5), 14-24

Whittington, J. L., Meskelis, S., Asare, E. & Beldona, S. (2017). Enhancing engagement through effective performance anagement. *In Enhancing Employee Engagement*, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 81 – 90.

Zhao, R. & Sheng, Y.H. (2019). The effect of leadership style on employee engagement: The moderating role of task structure. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, *7*, 404-420. https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2019.77033

https://www.scribd.com/doc/81709655/Gallup-Employee-Engagement-Questionnaire

Signature of Supervisor **Signature of Scholar**

Signature of Director

(With official seal)